

## Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 DPW-01 IO-12 OMB-01 RSR-01 /094 W  
----- 010499

O R 240635 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3233

INFO WHITE HOUSE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USDEL FRANCE

USDEL FPJMC

DOD

JCS

COMUSMACV

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2188

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, CASC, LA, VN

SUBJECT: STATUS OF LAO NEGOTIATIONS

1. DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE LAST THREE DAYS IN VIENTIANE MAKE IT CLEAR THAT POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE LAO PARTIES ON THE FORMATION OF THE PROVISIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT ( PGNU), AND MILITARY NEGOTIATIONS ON A DRAFT PROTOCOL WHICH WOULD INCLUDE PRISONER RELEASE PROVISIONS, ARE AT A COMPLETE STANDSTILL. THERE IS NO INDICATION WHEN PROGRESS MIGHT BE EXPECTED. THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE DEADLINE IN THE VIENTIANE 1973 AGREEMENT FOR FORMATION OF THE PGNU, MARCH 23, HAS COME AND GONE. THE CLOCK HAS THUS NOT BEGUN ON POW RELEASE UNDER THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT. NO ONE CAN HAZARD AN INFORMED GUESS WHEN THE NEW PGNU CAN OR WILL BE CONSTITUTED. A VAGUE LAO PRESSE " CLARIFICATION" MARCH 22, ATTRIBUTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER' S OFFICE, EXPRESSED HOPE  
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AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED NEXT WEEK, BUT THIS STRIKES US AS SOUVANNA' S WHISTLING IN THE DARK.

B. THE SENIOR LPF NEGOTIATOR IN VIENTIANE, PHOUN SIPRASEUTH, DEPARTED FOR HANOI ABOARD A SPECIAL ICC FLIGHT MARCH 22, WITH NO RETURN DATE SPECIFIED. AT OUR REQUEST ICC/ LAOS CANDEL HAMMILL PHONED LPF VIENTIANE REP SOTH PHETRASY THIS MORNING TO ENQUIRE WHETHER LPF PLENIPOTENTIARY PHOUMI VONGVICHIT WOULD BE ON TODAY' S AEROFLOT FLIGHT FROM HANOI. SOTH TOLD HIM HE HAD NO INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT. PHOUMI' S PRESENCE WILL BE NECESSARY FOR SERIOUS PGNU NEGOTIATIONS.

C. LATE LAST NIGHT, SOTH PHETRASY INFORMED HIS RLG COUNTERPART, GENERAL BOUNTHIENG, THAT THE LPF WAS NOT PREPARED TO PRESENT ITS DRAFT MILITARY PROTOCOL AT THE MEETING OF THE RLG/ LPF MILITARY COMMISSION SCHEDULED FOR THIS PURPOSE MARCH 24. SOTH REQUESTED THE MEETING CANCELLED, AND BOUNTHIENG COMPLIED. SOTH SAID HE HOPED TO HAVE A DOCUMENT READY BY MARCH 26, BUT COULD NOT GUARANTEE IT. NO NEW MEETINGS ARE SO FAR SCHEDULED.

2. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE FOREGOING IS THAT THE USG MUST CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE NINE US POWS CAPTURED IN LAOS, WHOSE NAMES WERE ON THE DRV PARIS LIST, MUST BE RETURNED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT AND RELATED UNDERSTANDINGS, RATHER THAN AWAIT FORMATION OF A PGNU IN LAOS UNDER THE TERMS OF THE LAO AGREEMENT. IN 1961-62, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO TIME- FRAME PRESCRIBED, IT TOOK 14 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE CEASEFIRE BEFORE THE LAO PARTIES COULD AGREE ON COMPOSITION OF A PROVISIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT.

GODLEY

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:**  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 MAR 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973VIENTI02188  
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**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** GDS  
**Errors:** n/a  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 NOV 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27-Nov-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <20-Dec-2001 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971230  
**Subject:** STATUS OF LAO NEGOTIATIONS  
**TAGS:** CASC, MOPS, PGOV, LA, VN  
**To:** BANGKOK  
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SAIGON

SECSTATE WASHDC

**Type:** TE

**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005